

# Tai Yo language

**Tai Yo**, also known as **Tai Mène** and **Nyaw**, is a Tai language of Southeast Asia. It is closely related to Tai Pao of Vietnam, where it may have originated. It was once written in a unique script, the Tai Yo script, but that is no longer in use.<sup>[1]</sup> The language is known regionally in Laos and Thailand as *Tai Mène* and *Tai Nyaw* and, in Vietnam as *Tai Do* and *Tai Quy Chau*.<sup>[5]</sup> Superficially, Tai Yo appears to be a Southwestern Tai language but this is only because of centuries of language contact and it is properly classified with the Northern Tai languages.<sup>[2]</sup> The *Nyaw/Nyo* spoken in central Thailand and western Cambodia is a dialect of Lao and not the same as Tai Yo.<sup>[6]</sup>

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## Tai Mène

The Mène people of Laos claim to be from Xieng Mène (also Xieng My) in Vietnam. These two names correspond to the following two towns in Nghệ An Province, Vietnam, located near Quỳ Châu (Chamberlain 1998).

- **Xiềng Líp**: located at the Nam Lip and Nam Chou (Houay Cha Ha) confluence, near the Cha Ha and Nam Ngoen (Ngân) confluence (which converge to form the Nam Souang or Houay Nguyên).
- **Bản Pốt**: located further east on the Nam Ngân.

Tai Mène appears to be related to Tai Pao (*paaw 4* < *\*baaw A*),<sup>[7]</sup> whose speakers claim to have originated from Tương Dương District, Nghệ An province, Vietnam (Chamberlain 1991). Tai Mène or related languages may have also been spoken in Thường Xuân District, Thanh Hóa, Vietnam by the Yo (Do) people (Robequain 1929).

## Distribution

Tai Mène is spoken in Borikhamxay Province, in many villages of Khamkeut District and several villages in Viang Thong District (Chamberlain 1998). The Vietic languages Liha, Phong, Toun, Ayoy, Maleng, and Thaveung are spoken nearby.

Tai Yo	
Region	Isan, Mekong floodplain, Vietnam
Native speakers	(60,000 cited 1990 – 1995 census) <sup>[1]</sup>
Language family	Kra–Dai <div>▪ Tai<div>▪ Northern<sup>[2]</sup> or Southwestern<sup>[3]</sup><div>▪ <b>Tai Yo</b></div></div></div>
Writing system	Vietnamese alphabet, Thai script
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	Either: <div>tyj – Tai Do</div> nyw – Tai Nyaw
Glottolog	taid1248 ( <span>http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/taid1248</span> ) <sup>[4]</sup>

- **Lak Xao subdistrict:** Ban Phon Hong, Ban Houay Keo
- **Khamkeut subdistrict:** Ban Phon Sa-at, Ban Phon Meuang Noy
- **Na Heuang subdistrict:** Lak 10, Lak 12, Na Khi
- **Nam Sak subdistrict:** Ban Phon Ngam, Ban Sop Khi
- **Sop Chat subdistrict:** Ban Sop Chat, Ban Sop Mong, Ban Phon Keo, Ban Sène Sy, Ban Tham Bing, Ban Phiang Pone
- **Ka'ane subdistrict:** Ban Thène Kwang, Ban Pha Poun, Ban Phiang Phô, Ban Sane, Ban Kok Feuang
- **Phon Thoen subdistrict:** Keng Kwang, Ban Kătô', Ban Kane Nha, Ban Keng Bit, Ban Sop Gnouang, Ban Vang Xao, Ban Tha Bak, Ban Kăpap
- **Sop Pone subdistrict:** Ban Sot, Ban Tha Sala, Ban Boung Kham
- **Tha Veng subdistrict:** Ban Phon Xay, Ban Kong Phat, Ban Xam Toey, Ban Na Khwan, Ban Phou Viang

## Notes

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1. Tai Do (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/tyj/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)  
Tai Nyaw (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/nyw/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Chamberlain (1991), p. 119
3. Pittayawat Pittayaporn (2009). *The Phonology of Proto-Tai*. PhD dissertation, Department of Linguistics, Cornell University. p. 318.
4. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Tai Do-Mene-Yo" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/taid1248>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
5. [1] ([http://www-01.sil.org/iso639-3/cr\\_files/2015-019.pdf](http://www-01.sil.org/iso639-3/cr_files/2015-019.pdf))
6. Thananan (2014)
7. See [Proto-Tai\\_language#Tones](#) for an explanation of the tone codes.

## Further reading

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